

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for applying postage stamps to mail pieces, comprising:
a controller for monitoring the mail pieces as they are processed by the system, the controller having information about each of the mail pieces;
a postage evidencing system for printing postage indicia on labels to be applied to the mail pieces, wherein each of the labels is associated with a particular mail piece and has a postage indicia that is generated using the information for the particular mail piece; and
an applicator for applying the labels to mail pieces.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the information about each of the mail pieces includes information in the group consisting of:
recipient address information;
postal class of the mail piece;
weight of the mail piece; and
contents of the mail piece.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein the postage evidencing system prints two or more labels for a particular mail piece, the combined postage value of the two or more labels equaling at least the required postage for the mail piece.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein the postage evidencing system prints a selected image on the labels in addition to the postage indicia.
5. The system of claim 4 wherein the selected image is selected based upon a characteristic of the recipient.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein blank labels used by the postage evidencing system are provided in a roll having a series of one or more labels.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein blank labels used by the postage evidencing system are provided in a sheet having one or more labels thereon.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the blank labels comprise a pre-printed serial number, the pre-printed serial number including a master serial number; and wherein the postage indicia is generated using the master serial number, pre-printed serial number, and a postage request.

9. A method for printing postage indicia on labels to create postage stamps, comprising:

receiving information associated with mail pieces that require postage, wherein the information can be used to determine the amount of the required postage; and

printing postage indicia corresponding to the required postage amount on blank labels to create postage stamps, wherein at least two of the postage stamps are not identical.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising:
calculating the required postage amount from the information associated with the mail pieces.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein the received information associated with the mail pieces comprises a required postage amount.

12. The method of claim 9 further comprising:
printing an image on the blank labels in addition to the postage indicia to create the postage stamps.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein each of the postage stamps are associated with a mail piece that is designated for a particular recipient; and wherein the image is selected based upon one or more characteristics of the particular recipient.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the one or more characteristics of the recipient are selected from the group consisting of:

- the recipient's age;
- the recipient's sex;
- the recipient's occupation; and
- the recipient's location.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein a single image is printed on a plurality of labels; and wherein the plurality of labels are printed with indicia representing at least two different postage amounts.

16. The method of claim 12 wherein the postage indicia printed on a plurality of labels represent a single postage amount , and wherein the plurality of labels are printed with varying images.

17. The method of claim 12 wherein the postage indicia and images printed on a plurality of labels both vary.

18. The method of claim 12 wherein the blank labels comprise a roll of labels that are printed in series.

19. The method of claim 12 wherein the blank labels comprise a sheet of labels.

20. The method of claim 9 wherein the blank labels comprise a serial number.

21. The method of claim 20 further comprising:
verifying that the serial number is valid.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein printed postage indicia includes the serial number.

23. The method of claim 9 wherein the printing step comprises:
receiving label stock having a pre-printed serial number, the pre-printed serial number including a master serial number;
generating an indicium using with the master serial number, pre-printed serial number, and required request; and
printing the indicium on the label stock.
24. A method for creating postage stamps for use on mail pieces, comprising:
calculating a postage amount due for each of the mail pieces;
printing postage indicia corresponding to the postage amount on blank labels to create postage stamps for use on the mail pieces, wherein each of the postage stamps is associated with a particular one of the mail pieces, and wherein at least two of the postage stamps are not identical; and
applying the postage stamps to the associated mail pieces.
25. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the postage stamps to ensure that the proper postage indicia was printed.
26. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the mail pieces to ensure that the postage stamps have been properly applied
27. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the quality of the mail pieces to ensure that the postage indicia represents a proper postage amount.
28. The method of claim 24 wherein the calculating step further comprises:
determining a destination for a mail piece; and
calculating the postage amount based upon the destination of the mail piece.

29. The method of claim 24 wherein the calculating step further comprises:
determining a weight for a mail piece; and
calculating the postage amount based upon the weight of the mail piece.

30. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
printing an image on the blank labels in addition to the postage indicia.

31. The method of claim 24 wherein each of the postage stamps are associated with a mail piece that is designated for a particular recipient; and wherein the image for each postage stamp is selected based upon one or more characteristics of the associated particular recipient.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the one or more characteristics of the recipient are selected from the group consisting of:

the recipient's age;
the recipient's sex;
the recipient's occupation; and
the recipient's location.

33. The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a roll of labels that are printed in series.

34. The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a sheet of labels.

35. The method of claim 24 further comprising:
monitoring the progress of mail pieces in a high-speed letter processing system; and
creating the postage stamps associated with each of the mail pieces before the mail pieces arrive at a postage stamp applicator; and
coordinating the operation of the postage stamp applicator and a postage evidencing system that creates the stamps to ensure that the correct postage stamps are applied to each envelope.

36. The method of claim 24 wherein the blank labels comprise a serial number.

37. The method of claim 36 further comprising:
verifying that the serial number is valid.

38. The method of claim 36 wherein printed postage indicia includes the serial
number.

39. The method of claim 24 wherein the printing step further comprises:
receiving label stock having a pre-printed serial number, the pre-printed serial number
including a master serial number;
generating postage indicia using the master serial number, pre-printed serial number, and
required request; and
printing the postage indicia on the label stock.